

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church



Weekly Sermon Series

Taking Root: Walking Wet...Gospel of Truth Numbers 21:4–9; John 3:14–21

In today's text, John recalls a story from Numbers where the Israelites are dissatisfied and murmuring against God. In an action to lead them to repentance, God surrounds the people with poisonous snakes. At Moses' plea on their behalf, God tells Moses to make a bronze image of a serpent and place it on a pole. With Moses' action, the people respond by looking at the image and repent as they again remember what the God of Moses has done in the past to save them.

John recalls this story to illustrate how Jesus had to be lifted up to save us. This lifting up was done twice: when Jesus was lifted up unto the cross and again when he was lifted up into heaven on his ascension. John continues with the good news of John 3:16— "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

You can imagine that when the Israelites looked at the bronze serpent and remembered how God had saved them in the past by taking them out of Egypt, they bitterly regretted their lack of faith. This remembrance must have

reinforced their belief in God. They believed again that he would save them and he did.

So, too, we must believe with our whole hearts in God who sent Jesus; we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God and trust completely what he has told us and exemplified about God. That true believing will result in our serving and obeying him.

As we think back through our lives we remember the times when God has walked through the dark times with us and, yes, has saved us from some experiences when we would have walked heedlessly into danger. Do these remembrances add to our faith in God?

Think of the times when we have gone our way and brought ourselves into situations when only a return to God and God's way kept us from disaster. Why is it that God continues to call us back? The text tells us it is because God loves us. Only us? Only our denomination? Only our nation? No, it is because God loved the world that God sent his Son to die. Such a tremendous love that called for such a tremendous sacrifice!

What should our response to this sacrifice be? Certainly not an apathetic acceptance, but rather a response that changes every area of our lives. Not a response that keeps the Good News for ourselves but rather one that shares this news with all in whom we come in contact.

"Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim. Till all the world adore his sacred name." Amen.

-- Week of March 22, 2009